

From: larsen007@aol.com [mailto:larsen007@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2018 2:34 PM
To: William Lippert
Cc: Loring Starr
Subject: Importation of Prescription Drugs into VT

Dear Representative Lippert and Members of the House Health Care Committee:

I understand that your committee is currently discussing S.175, an act relating to importation of prescription drugs into Vermont. **I wanted to let you know about a recent experience I had with prescription drugs in another country** and express my support for any legislation that would assist in lowering the cost of prescription drugs in Vermont.

I recently returned from a trip to India, where I toured many of the typical tourist locations in northern India. While visiting a shrine outside of Jaipur, India, my leg was grabbed from behind by a monkey. In my attempt to free my leg from the monkey's grasp, I was scratched. Because the CDC recommends that people bitten or scratched by animals get rabies shots, I sought medical help and ended up getting three of the required five rabies shots in India. (Fortunately, the new protocol for rabies is just five shots in the arm - on days 0, 3, 7, 14, 28 - and no longer the very painful method.)

I found it quite interesting and informative to deal with medical professionals in India. I saw a total of four medical doctors - including three who came to my hotel room - and purchased three doses of rabies vaccine. Using today's exchange rate (\$1 U.S. = 64.736 Indian Rupees), the total cost for all those services was \$90.49 in U.S. currency.

Since returning to VT, I have had lab tests and visited the UVM Medical Center's Travel Clinic for the additional two doses of rabies vaccine. I haven't yet received the bills for the lab tests or the visits with medical staff at the Travel Clinic, but I did have to pay for the two doses of rabies vaccine. You'll be interested to know that the Pharmacy at UVM Medical Center charged \$328.12 for each vaccine. (Fortunately, my low-deductible medical insurance kicked in and I had to pay only \$42.00 for each vaccine.) The name of the vaccine purchased here in VT is Rabavert SUSR. The Generic Name is Rabies Vaccine while the Brand Name was Imovax RabiesRabAvert.

Since I did not receive the exact same rabies vaccine in India, I can't exactly compare apples to apples. But, I think you'd still be interested in knowing what I paid for the two different drugs I received (Abhayrab Rabies Vaccine manufactured by Human Biological Institute in Telangana, India, and Rabivax-S Rabies Vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India, Pune, India). One cost 328 Indian Rupees while the other cost 325 Indian Rupies. Using today's exchange rate, the rabies **vaccine in the U.S. cost over 64 times more than the cost of a similar vaccine in India**. To me, that is an outrageous cost difference.

In my view, something must be done to lower the cost of prescription drugs in VT and the rest of the U.S. Anything that you and your committee can do to help bring down the cost of prescription drugs in VT would be appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sheri Larsen
11 Discovery Road
Essex Junction, VT 05452
(Essex Town resident)
802-878-6828
larsen007@aol.com

Dated 3/26/18